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Message Text

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70
ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

NIC-01 IO-13 CU-04 RSR-01 /119 W
---------- 031711
R 081435 Z JUN 73
FM AMEMBASSY LISBON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8090
INFO AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES
AMCONSUL LUANDA
AMCONSUL OPORTO
AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

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EO 11652: N/ A
TAGS: PINT, PGOV
SUBJ: PERSPECTIVES ON OVERSEAS VETERANS CONGRESS

REFS: (A) LISBON 1970; (B) OPORTO 0097

1. SUMMARY: RECENTLY CONCLUDED CONGRESS OF VETERANS OF OVERSEAS WARS APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN MANIPULATED BY GOP TO SOFTEN RIGHT- WING CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT. NEVERTHELESS OBSERVERS HERE SEE CONGRESS RESOLUTIONS AS IMPLICITY CRITICAL OF GOP INTENTIONS AND POLICIES WITH REGARD TO PORTUGAL' S AFRICAN TERRITORIES. INTERESTING SIDELIGHT WAS EVIDENT AND SUCCESSFUL EFFORT BY GENERAL SPINOLA TO DISASSOCIATE HIMSELF FROM CONGRESS. END SUMMARY

2. BY BEHIND THE SCENES MANIPULATIONS JUST BEFORE BEGINNING OF THE RECENT CONGRESS OF VETERANS OF OVERSEAS WARS, THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT REPLACED THE MOST EXTREME OF THE RIGHT- WING ORGANIZERS OF THE CONGRESS, INSTALLED GOP LOYALIST AS CHAIRMAN, AND INTENSIFIED PUBLICITY ON SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC MATTERS TO BE TAKEN UP BY THE
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CONGRESS, DOWN- PLAYING POLITICAL ASPECTS. TWO DAYS
BEFORE CONGRESS BEGAN, GOP STOLE ADDITIONAL THUNDER BY
ANNOUNCING NUMBER OF BREAD- AND- BUTTER BENEFITS FOR
VETERANS, SOME OF WHICH CONGRESS ORGANIZERS HAD PLANNED
TO DEMAND. THESE EFFORTS SUCCEEDED IN HEADING OFF
ANTI- GOVERNMENT RESOLUTIONS WHICH EARLIER HAD APPEARED
LIKELY.

3. ANNOUNCEMENT BY CONGRESS CHAIRMAN, HIMSELF REPORTEDLY
CLOSE TO DEFENSE MINISTER, THAT PRESIDENT THOMAZ HAD
AGREED TO ACCEPT HONORARY CHAIRMANSHIP OF CONGRESS WAS
PROBABLY ADDITIONAL INSURANCE AGAINST EMBARRASSING ANTI-
GOP RESOLUTIONS.

4. ON EVE OF CONGRESS SEMI- OFFICIAL NEWS AGENCY ANI
DISTRIBUTED COMMENTARY WHICH PREDICTED (CORRECTLY) THAT
" UNDIPLOMATIC" AND " EXCESSIVE" RHETORIC WOULD BE HEARD
AT THE CONGRESS, BUT ALLOWED THAT THIS WAS NATURAL AND
SHOULD GIVE NO CAUSE FOR ALARM. COMMENTARY AFFIRMED
THAT IF " SO- CALLED DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION" WAS PERMITTED
TO PROPOUND ITS " COMMUNIST THESIS" OF " COLONIAL WARS"
AND CALL FOR HAND- OVER OF AFRICAN TERRITORIES TO INSURGENT
MOVEMENTS AT AVEIRO CONGRESS, VETERANS CERTAINLY SHOULD BE ALLOWED
TO PROCLAIM THEIR WISH THAT THESE TERRITORIES
REMAIN PORTUGUESE NO MATTER HOW COSTLY THAT MAY BE.
DESPITE GOP' S BOYS- WILL- BE- BOYS TOLERANCE OF CONGRESS,
IT IS RELIABLY REPORTED THAT PM CAETANO SOUGHT TO PROHIBIT
GATHERING AND AGREED TO PERMIT IT ONLY IN FACE OF
PRESSURE FROM PRESIDENT THOMAZ AND CERTAIN MINISTERS.

5. CONGRESS RESOLUTIONS MORE NOTABLE FOR WHAT THEY OMIT
THAN FOR WHAT THEY SAY. RESOLUTIONS HAVE NO KIND WORDS
FOR GOP POLICIES, PM CAETANO, OR MINISTER OF DEFENSE
SA VIANA REBELLO, AND IMPLY THAT RECENTLY ANNOUNCED
VETERANS BENEFITS ARE INSUFFICIENT. RESOLUTIONS DO NOT
EVEN MENTION, MUCH LESS PRAISE, EXISTING OFFICIAL
VETERANS' ORGANIZATIONS.

6. PLANS FOR FOLLOW- UP ARE NOTEWORTHY. 1974 CONGRESS
TO BE HELD IN LUANDA AND ORGANIZED BY ANGOLAN COMMISSION
OF VETERANS HEADED BY ONE JOAO CARDOSO. COMMISSIONS
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ALSO DECREED FOR MOZAMBIQUE (CHIEF: LUIS SILVA ROCHA)
AND GUINEA (CHIEF " TO BE NAMED LATER") , AND METROPOLE.
METROPOLE COMMISSION WILL BE HEADED BY CHARISMATIC DISABLED
VET JOAO VILALOBOS, ONE OF THE ORIGINAL FAR- RIGHT
ORGANIZERS OF THE CONGRESS WHO HAS REPORTEDLY NOW AGREED
TO FOLLOW GOP POLICY. OUSTED WAS ZARCO MONIZ FERREIRA,
ULTRACONSERVATIVE VET WHO INITIATED CONGRESS AND SET

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IT ON ITS ORIGINAL ANTI- GOP COURSE. (MONIZ FERREIRA
WAS ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OF " YOUNG PORTUGAL," AN
EXTREME RIGHT- WING STUDENT MOVEMENT, A DECADE AGO.)

7. GUINEA' S C- IN- C AND GOVERNOR, GEN. ANTONIO SPINOLA,
SNUBBED CONGRESS. NOT ONLY DID HE FAIL SEND GREETINGS
(SEE REF A), BUT APPARENTLY SANCTIONED THE DESPATCH,
BY TWO HIGHLY DECORATED OFFICERS, PURPORTING TO SPEAK
FOR 400 VETERANS, OF BLISTERING, ANTI- CONGRESS TELEGRAM
TO ORGANIZERS. AS BEST WE CAN TELL, NO ONE FROM GUINEA
ATTENDED CONGRESS, AND APPARENTLY NOBODY IS AVAILABLE
TO HEAD FOLLOW- UP COMMISSIN CONGRESS DECREED FOR GUINEA.

8. CONGRESS DEMONSTRATED (A) SUBSTANTIAL BODY OF OPINION
SIMPLY NOT CONFIDENT GOP UNDER CAETANO HAS SUFFICIENT
DETERMINATION TO HANG ON IN AFRICA; (B) CAETANO IS WILLING
AND ABLE TO MANIPULATE RIGHT- WING, BUT HESITATES TO
CONFRONT IT DIRECTLY; (C) SPINOLA FEELS PORTUGAL' S (AND
SHHIS OWN) FUTURE DOES NOT LIE WITH RIGHT- WING.
POST

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TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PO
To: EUR
LOURENCO MARQUES
LUANDA
OPORTO
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